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ABSTRACT

This paper presents findings of a study that examined the relationship between demographic subgroups of principals in Louisiana and their perceptions of the socialization process. Information about principals' socialization experiences was obtained from a sample of 161 first-year principals during the fall semester of 1994. Socialization constructs were measured by the "Principal Socialization Inventory," a self-report survey instrument. Analysis of variance (ANOVA) techniques were used to determine the relationships between the independent variables (community type, age, ethnicity, gender, school size, school type, location, and type of previous experience) and the dependent variables (socialization level, school vision, and dependence on staff). Findings indicate that the demographic variables were generally not predictors of the socialization levels of beginning principals. However, principals in more populated areas reported higher scores concerning school vision than did principals in less populated areas. African-American principals and elementary/middle school principals showed higher mean scores regarding school vision. Principals who worked in a different school during the previous year reported a greater dependence on staff members to assist in the socialization process. The data lend support to the notion that the principals experienced socialization in different ways--the primary factors were the individual's personal characteristics and the school's organizational characteristics. Six tables are included. The appendix contains a copy of the survey. (LMI)

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DIFFERENCES IN PERCEPTIONS OF THE ORGANIZATIONAL SOCIALIZATION PROCESS AMONG SUBGROUPS OF BEGINNING PRINCIPALS IN LOUISIANA

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Abstract

The purpose of the study was to examine the relationship between demographic subgroups of beginning principals in Louisiana and their perception of the socialization process. Socialization occurs when a principal begins work in a new school, and the organization "breaks in" the new principal to the norms of that school.

Information about the principals' socialization experiences was obtained from a sample of 161 first-year principals during the fall semester of 1994. Socialization constructs were measured using the *Principal Socialization Inventory,* a self-report survey instrument.

ANOVA techniques were employed to determine the relationships between the independent variables (community type, age, ethnicity, gender, school size, school type, and location and type of previous experience) and the dependent variables (socialization level, school vision, and dependence on staff).

The results show that demographic variables are generally not predictors of the socialization level for beginning principals. However, principals in more populated areas reported higher scores concerning school vision than did principals in less populated areas. Also, African-American principals and elementary/middle school principals showed higher mean scores regarding school vision. Principals who worked in a different school during the previous year reported a greater dependence on staff members to assist in the socialization process.

Introduction

The school principal has received a great deal of attention over the last decade, and many efforts to improve education have focused on the principalship (Block, 1980; Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Hurley, 1990). Whether the impact is positive or negative, the principal has an enormous amount of influence on the character of the school. The principal sets the tone for the school and is encouraged to direct the instructional program. Clearly, the principal is a critical figure in developing the academic and social climate of the school.

Also, it is estimated that up to 75% of current principals will leave their positions within the next decade. It can be assumed then, that for several years, many individuals will be accepting their first principalship positions (Daresh, 1992). New principals of today are faced with a wide assortment of challenges, making the initiation process difficult.

While many new principals are moving into their initial assignments, an examination of the beginning principalship is appropriate. Because of the impact of the school principal and the rising demand for new principals, the beginning principalship is the main area of interest for this study. Issues concerning the induction of beginning principals are examined, with an emphasis on the socialization process of those principals.

Upon entering the profession, or passing through some other professional boundary, principals participate in a process of *socialization*. Socialization is most simply defined as the "learning of social roles" (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1977). The socialization process usually begins with *anticipatory* socialization, which occurs before a principal assumes a specific position, but the process of socialization continues throughout the individual's career (Greenfield, 1985c; Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). The principal begins the profession at the *entry* stage and then progresses through a hierarchy of socialization stages. Time alone accounts for initial movement to higher stages of socialization, but some individuals are thought to plateau at certain stages, and progress no further (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992).

When going through the socialization process, the individual is expected to adjust to the prevailing norms, or "rules of thumb" for that organization. These adjustments make a cooperative effort possible and help the principal adopt the values and norms of the school (Hart, 1991). Simultaneously, the school must adjust to the new principal. It is thought that both the principal's personal characteristics as well as the school's climate, or organizational characteristics, are important in this process. The key idea is that both the principal and the school bring something to the socialization process. That is, the principal goes through a period of adjustment to the school while the school is simultaneously adjusting to the principal. The socialization of beginning principals is a part of that interactive process.

Hart (1993) suggests that the socialization process includes professional socialization and organizational socialization. The *professional* socialization process begins in principal training or preparation programs--usually through master's level university coursework. As individuals secure administrative positions, they interact with others in the profession and begin to internalize the values and beliefs generally associated with the principalship. This identity-building process is identified as professional socialization.

Organizational socialization occurs when a principal enters a district or school as a new member of that social group. If the school community is viewed as an organization, the process of socialization can be seen as important to the success of the new principal as he or she chooses to accept or reject the values of that particular organization (Porter, Lawler, & Hackman, 1974). Organizational socialization is a different process than professional socialization in that it teaches a principal the behaviors required in a particular role within a particular organization. The norms associated with a specific school context may be very different from those learned through the professional socialization process.

Beginning principals are thought to experience both types of socialization--professional socialization to school administration and organizational socialization to a new school setting (Hart, 1993). The purpose of this study is to focus on the

organizational socialization process by considering personal characteristics and school characteristics that may be related to that process.

Research Context

Organization socialization is important because it is one of the defining processes that shapes the principal's work in the school. At a time when school reform and instructional leadership are considered important ideas, information is needed which would help new principals. The principal's initial phase of work at a new location is critical to his or her response to the socialization process. When a principal begins work in a new school, responses to the socialization process are thought to take on one of two forms--either *custodial* or *innovative*. A custodial response is assumed when the principal accepts the existing state or condition of the role. Innovative responses occur when the principal enters a new position planning for change. Innovative responses are further defined to include both content innovation and role innovation (Van Maanen & Schein, 1979). A closer examination of the socialization process reveals a basic tenet of socialization theory. Drawing attention to the leader and the context simultaneously, this fundamental proposition suggests that socialization responses are functions of both *individual* characteristics and *organizational* contexts (Hart, 1993; Hurley, 1990). The effect that schools, as organizations, have on the socialization process of beginning principals is the main area of interest for this study.

Understanding what both the individual and the organization bring to this process may help reveal why particular responses result. Obviously, the principal is the main actor in this process; however, the school, or more precisely, the individuals in the school organization (students, teachers, central office staff, and parents) also have a key part in determining the orientation a principal may assume. Hallinger and Murphy (1987) point out that common sense, along with numerous research studies, tell us that contextual variables such as "organizational size, staff characteristics, technology, and environment" (p. 2) influence leaders in organizations. In spite of this, research concerning the school's impact on school administrators has been

limited. Considered in this way, the work of the school principal is defined by the process that is a mutual result of the impact of both the principal and the school (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Hurley, 1990).

In this context, the process of organizational socialization seems to establish a fit between the values and priorities of the organization and those of the individual. Although the principal is considered the leader of the school, *all* new organizational members are influenced by the norms and expectations of the group, including the principal (Hurley, 1990). A better understanding of the organizational socialization process of new principals is needed to increase the likelihood that principals will be empowered for change in the future.

It is important to help principals become aware of the various stages of the principalship, or what Van Maanen (1977) calls the *shape* of the career. A career is a combination of ups, downs, and plateaus. Such understanding may help principals feel less inadequate, especially during the early stages of their careers. Also, principals may feel reassurance from the realization that the socialization process takes time, and that the ability to work through difficulties eventually leads to higher stages of socialization.

Related Literature

Beginning principals. Many state education agencies, professional associations for school administrators, and university officials have predicted that the next few years will offer excellent career opportunities for men and women seeking positions as principals (Daresh, 1987a, 1987b, 1992). This is due to a variety of factors, including decreases in the number of individuals entering the field of education and increases in the number of students in some districts (Daresh, 1986).

In general, while some research has been conducted regarding the first year of the principalship, the focus has generally not been on the socialization process of the new principal. A bad beginning as a new principal can have disastrous results, even culminating in the firing of that individual (Barth, 1992; Kelleher, 1992). More specifically, there has been little attention directed toward the organizational

socialization aspects of new principals. A gap in current knowledge exists regarding the organization's impact on the socialization of new principals.

Socialization theory. Stated simply, socialization is the "learning of social roles" (Merton, Reader, & Kendall, 1957). Merton (1963) further defines socialization as the process by which individuals acquire the values and attitudes of the group. The framework on which the principal socialization research is based comes from a body of socialization literature that views the leader and the context simultaneously. Beyond these definitions, which essentially look at how members choose to adopt the norms of the group, socialization must also be examined in terms of the way a new work environment makes demands on the individual (Daresh, 1987b).

Interaction. Hart (1993) defines interaction between individuals as the "fundamental unit of analysis" when studying organizational socialization. Interaction is broadly defined as the overt actions, covert plans, and physical presence of one person that influence others in a cycle of exchange and communication. Methods or types of interaction provide a framework for explaining principal socialization events.

Interaction and culture. Schein (1985) provides a model of interaction that is useful in interpreting the process of principal socialization. Schein states that organizational *culture* is the outcome of interaction among group members and between the group and elements in its environment. Representing the deeper level of assumptions which are the result of learned responses to group problems, culture is the learned product of group experience. Culture is found only where there is a definable group with a significant history. Culture is more concretely identified as observed behavioral patterns, organizational norms of the group, prevailing dominant values, rules for getting along, and the general feeling or climate of the organization.

Tactical dimensions of organizational socialization. Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) tactics of organizational socialization refer to the ways in which the experiences of new individuals in an organization are structured for them by members of the organization. These tactics may be intentionally or unintentionally selected for them by others in the organization. Taken together, these tactics are thought to influence the

new member to respond in either a custodial or innovative manner. The following dimensions of socialization follow the fundamental proposition that people respond to organizationally defined roles differently because people and organizations differ, and because socialization processes differ from one organization to the next. The dimensions are (1) collective versus individual socialization, (2) formal versus informal socialization, (3) sequential versus random steps in the socialization process, (4) fixed versus variable socialization processes, (5) serial versus disjunctive socialization processes, and (6) investiture versus divestiture processes. Van Maanen and Schein's (1979) model of socialization tactics presented here serves as one basis for examining the organizational socialization processes of new principals.

Using the Van Maanen and Schein model, Greenfield (1985a) argues that the socialization process for beginning principals has the following characteristics: (1) the socialization process is individual, (2) the informal character of the process makes it difficult for the new principal to know what is valued by the organization, (3) the steps and events of socialization appear to be random, (4) the time frame associated with the socialization process is variable, (5) the serial character of the process encourages continuity, and (6) subtle divestiture processes exist which may require new principals to disassociate from their orientation to the teacher group and adopt new values associated with the principalship.

Socialization of beginning principals. The move from teaching to administration is a critical phase in the professional development of principals (Crow, Mecklowitz, & Weekes, 1992). At this point, the new principal either develops the conviction to become an innovative leader or adopts the organizational status quo of the previous administration (Greenfield, 1985a).

Daresh and Playko (1992a) also consider the move from teaching to administration to be pivotal, and distinguish among three types of socialization processes which may occur during this time, including (1) anticipatory socialization, (2) professional socialization, and (3) organizational socialization. The transition from teaching to the principalship involves socialization experiences that help to create not

only the technical expertise but also the values and norms associated with the position. Differences in the socialization process may be responsible for differences in philosophy, such as adoption of a custodial or innovative orientation to the principalship (Crow, et al., 1992).

Beginning principals research. A number of research studies have been conducted which examine the overall socialization process of new principals. In general, research on the first year of the principalship concludes that this is a time marked by apprehension, anxiety, and frustration (Daresh, 1992; Diederich, 1987; Sussman, 1985; Roberts, 1993). Often, new principals are so discouraged after the first year that they consider leaving the principalship at that time (Duke, Issacson, Sagor, & Schmuck, 1984).

Several researchers have examined the socialization of beginning principals through a participant-observer framework. When the author of the study is the new principal being socialized, a unique view of the socialization process is provided (Hart, 1985, 1987, 1988, 1993; Hartman, 1985; Jaskowiak, 1992; O'Brien, 1988; Shackleford, 1992).

According to Hart (1993), the socialization process for beginning principals is primarily achieved through personal interactions with teachers, students, parents, other administrators, and central office personnel. The primary means of socialization is personal communication. In a self-study of the socialization process, Hart (1987) reports that a system of social interaction support developed from a variety of sources. For example, principals from other schools assisted by visiting, sustaining, and supporting the new principal.

Professional socialization of beginning principals. Wolcott (1973) provided a classic description of the socialization process of a new principal. His study showed how the principal was influenced by central office personnel, peers, teachers, and administrative guidelines. The socialization of principals to the profession begins in training or pre-service preparation. Research on the professional socialization of beginning principals investigates the major variables that help to develop the principal

during this process (Duke et al., 1984; Greenfield, 1985a, 1985b). This model emphasizes the impact of the existing structure of administrators, training, university preparation, and professional associations on the new principal (Hart, 1993). As Leithwood, Steinbach, and Begley (1992) explain, socialization is "those processes by which an individual selectively acquires the knowledge, skills, and dispositions needed to adequately perform a social role, in this case the school principalship."

In a major longitudinal study documenting the professional socialization of 12 first-time high school principals (Parkay, Currie, and Rhodes, 1992; Parkay & Hall, 1992), it is stated that during the socialization process, principals pass through five distinct stages: survival, control, stability, educational leadership, and professional actualization.

Using Parkay, Currie, and Rhodes' (1992) results as a model, Parkay, Gmelch, and Rhodes (1992) developed a quantitative study to test this socialization framework. It was found that while principals typically pass from one socialization stage to the next, time in the principalship does not automatically result in entry to the higher stages of professional socialization, except at the lower levels.

Daresh (1986, 1987a, 1992) identified three major problem areas reported by principals in a study of new principals. Principals reported problems with role clarification, limitations on technical expertise, and difficulties experienced with the socialization to the profession and a particular school system. The principals discussed problems with "how to read" the signs of the system in which they were working. They wanted to know, "How were principals supposed to act?"

The 1984 study by Duke et al. identifies four features of professional socialization to the principalship that they applied to principals' first years. These features are (1) duration of the socialization period, (2) mechanisms of socialization, (3) relationships between expectations and the realities of the job, and (4) formal and informal preparation for school administration. Principals in this study generally found that their professional socialization occurred during their first year as principals.

Organizational socialization of beginning principals. When principals enter a school or district as new members of that organizational culture, they experience the other type of socialization--organizational socialization. Van Maanen and Schein (1979) define organizational socialization as the process by which one is taught and learns "the ropes" of a particular organizational role. Organizational socialization is the process that teaches the new member the knowledge, values, and behaviors expected within a particular organization. Professional socialization is more closely related to the beliefs and attitudes associated with the profession in general. The values and norms learned through the organizational socialization process may be very different from those learned during the professional socialization process (Hart, 1993).

The process of organizational socialization is imbedded in the context of the particular organization. This immediate and persuasive process often overpowers the effects of the more carefully structured professional socialization process (Duke, 1987).

In many professions, including teaching and administration, the carefully planned formal study and internship experiences often yield to the immediate pressure of the new setting (Hart, 1993). Unfortunately, the process of socialization used by school districts to induct principals to their roles is often not adequate for the development of innovative leadership (Anderson, 1988).

One of the major problems of new principals reported by Daresh (1986, 1987a, 1992) is socialization to the organization. Here, principals seem to be questioning their "fit" into the specific school system. At issue were the implied expectations that principals should somehow understand the proper routes to be taken to survive and solve problems. Beginning principals, especially those coming from other districts, feel naive regarding the effects of a political and social system they do not fully understand.

Implications from principal socialization research. While earlier studies of the principalship were primarily investigations about styles of leadership and identification of leader traits, later work has begun to recognize the importance of the context in

which principals work. Knowing that the principal/organization relationship is a reciprocal one influences the agenda for future research. Evidence has been provided to suggest that principal effectiveness may be tied to the conditions under which the socialization process occurs.

While studies have examined the socialization of beginning principals, the primary interest has been in the area of socialization to the profession. There still exists a research gap concerning the organization's influence on the new principal. Thus, the focus of this review is to examine the organizational socialization process of beginning principals, and the impact that process has on the principal's vision for the school.

Methodology

Research design. This study is built on the causal-comparative research framework. Causal-comparative studies examine naturally occurring phenomenon to search for possible causal relationships between defined groups (Borg & Gall, 1989). The study was conducted during the fall semester of 1994. Because it is thought that the most pronounced aspects of socialization occur during an individual's initial phase in a new position, the data were collected during the first semester of the school year.

The study is designed to answer the following research questions:

1. Is there a relationship between the *community type* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

2. Is there a relationship between the *age* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

3. Is there a relationship between the *ethnicity* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

4. Is there a relationship between the *gender* of the beginning principals and the socialization experiences of those principals?

5. Is there a relationship between the *size of the school* where the beginning principals work and the level of socialization for those principals?

6. Is there a relationship between the *type of school* (elementary, middle, secondary, combination) where the beginning principals work and the socialization experiences of those principals?

7. Is there a relationship between the *prior location* of the beginning principals' experience and the socialization experiences of those principals?

8. Is there a relationship between the beginning principals' *prior experience* and the socialization experiences of those principals?

Sample. This study builds on earlier work concerning school principals, and more specifically, on research specific to beginning principals (Blumberg & Greenfield, 1986; Parkay & Hall, 1992; Hart, 1993). In this study, a beginning principal is defined as an individual who is in his or her first semester as a school principal. This definition excludes individuals who are new principals in a particular school, but were previously principals in some other school.

The general population for this study is the total population of beginning school principals. The information derived from this study would be useful to any school principal in analyzing the social factors that occur in any new work situation. Because all school principals are, at one time, beginning school principals, the study is applicable to all principals.

Before the beginning of the 1994-95 school year, the 66 school districts in Louisiana submitted a comprehensive list of 1,441 public school principals to the Bureau of School Accountability at the Louisiana Department of Education. A manual comparison of that list to a list of all 1993-94 public school principals provided in the *1993-94 Louisiana School Directory* (Louisiana Department of Education, 1994) resulted in an exhaustive listing of 313 principals with new school assignments. According to this process, 22% of the public schools in Louisiana were identified as having new principals for the 1994-95 school year.

Of the 313 surveys mailed, 202 (64.5%) were returned. Based on the demographic information provided by the principals, 41 principals were identified as *transfer* principals. A transfer principal is not a first-year principal, but an experienced

principal with a new school assignment. Transfer principals were excluded from the analysis, resulting in a useable sample of 161 principals. The unit of analysis is the individual school principal.

Instrumentation. The study is designed to provide information about relationships that may exist between subgroups of principals and their socialization experiences. The survey used in this study (see Appendix A) is based on the *Principal Socialization Inventory* (PSI), developed by Parkay, Gmelch, & Rhodes (1992). One component of the PSI is a set of 14 Likert scale items designed to assess principals' level of socialization, based on previously established stages of socialization, as defined by the *Professional Socialization Hierarchy* (Parkay, Currie, & Rhodes, 1992). The stages of socialization identified by the *Professional Socialization Hierarchy* include: (1) survival, (2) control, (3) stability, (4) educational leadership, and (5) professional actualization. Each item is rated on a five-point Likert scale measuring the degree to which the principal believes the statement describes his or her experiences. It is thought that most new principals begin at the survival stage, and progress upward through the hierarchy over time (Parkay & Hall, 1992).

Reliability. The instrument has been modified, and the reliability scores of the PSI were calculated on the data collected, using the *Cronbach's alpha* technique. One of the most important indicators of the scale's quality is the reliability coefficient measured by alpha. Problems associated with Likert scales, such as noncentral means, poor variability, or low item-scale correlations, tend to reduce the alpha coefficient. Alpha is an indication of the proportion of variance in the scale scores that is attributable to the true scores (DeVillis, 1991). The alpha associated with this administration of the modified PSI is .76.

Validity. Before the administration of the survey instrument, scale items were analyzed by current school administrators, previous school administrators, and Louisiana Department of Education staff to assure content validity. The modified version of the *Principal Socialization Inventory* was administered to all principals in the sample.

Data collection. The survey instrument was mailed to the beginning principals approximately two months after the beginning of the 1994-95 school year. The survey was attached to a brief letter describing the study, and a stamped envelope was included. Follow-up letters encouraging participation were mailed to those principals who did not return the survey within a two-week period.

Variables. In addition to the Likert items, the survey instrument requested demographic information from the beginning principals. Information was gathered in the areas of (1) community type, (2) age, (3) ethnicity, (4) gender, (5) school size, (6) school type (elementary, middle, secondary, combination), (7) type of prior experience, and (8) location of prior experience (see Appendix A). These demographic characteristics represent the independent variables in the study. The dependent variables (socialization level, school vision, and dependence on staff) were extracted from the PSI Likert scale items.

Data analysis. Using the PROC CORR program in SAS, the data from the *Principal Socialization Inventory* were entered in a correlation matrix to determine relationships between scale items. Based on negative correlations with the other scale items and qualitative review, items 1, 5, 6, 11, 12, 13, and 14 were reversed scored. The 14 items were then analyzed using the FACTOR program in SAS to determine how many latent variables were represented in the 14-item scale. Based on this procedure, it was determined that three dependent variables were imbedded within the PSI scale items. The dependent variables were identified as *socialization level* (items 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 8, 12, 13, and 14), *school vision* (items 9 and 10), and *dependence on staff* (items 3 and 8).

A series of one-way ANOVAs ($p < .05$) were used to examine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variables. This analysis was conducted using ANOVA procedures in SAS. In addition, all demographic data are presented through the use of descriptive statistics. Frequency distributions and percentages of demographic subgroups are presented to give an overview of the entire sample of beginning principals.

Results

Socialization level. ANOVA results show that only the independent variable *community type* shows a statistically significant relationship with the principals' *socialization level.* The principal's socialization level represents the degree to which the principal has been socialized to that school. A higher score represents a more controlled situation, and possibly a smoother transition. These results are presented in Table 1 below. No interaction effects were found between independent variables and the principals' socialization level.

Table 1. ANOVA Results for Principals' *Socialization Level.*

Source	SS	df	F	p
Community Type	323.18	4	3.02	< .05
Error	3634.96	136		
Total	3958.14	140		

A post hoc Tukey test was performed on the independent variable *community type* to determine which community types show a statistically significant difference on the dependent variable *socialization level.* The results of this test show that communities categorized as *towns* (M=21.82) and *urban fringe* (27.89) are different, with respect to the principals' level of socialization. Towns and urban fringe communities have the same population definition (2,500 - 24,999); however, urban fringe communities are defined as being contiguous to metropolitan areas.

School vision. ANOVA results show that the independent variables *community type, ethnicity,* and *school type* show a statistically significant relationship with the principals' *school vision.* School vision is thought to represent higher level components of the socialization process. These results are presented in Table 2 below. No interaction effects were found between independent variables and school vision.

Table 2. ANOVA Results for Principals' *School Vision.*

Source	SS	df	F	p
Community Type	11.41	4	2.75	< .05
Ethnicity	7.27	1	7.01	< .01
School Type	10.35	3	3.32	< .05
Error	131.84	127		
Total	160.88	135		

A post hoc Tukey test was performed on the independent variables *community type, ethnicity,* and *school type* to determine what differences exist for the dependent variable *school vision.*

The results of this test show that the *school vision* mean scores of smaller communities (rural, town) are generally lower than the mean scores of larger communities (cities, urban fringe, metropolitan), as shown in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Mean Differences for *School Vision.*

Community Type	Mean	N
Rural	7.84	51
Town	7.91	23
City	8.56	16
Urban Fringe	8.40	10
Metropolitan	8.43	37

Also, African-American and white principals showed a statistically significant difference on the variable *school vision.* African-American principals (M=8.47) were found to have a higher *school vision* score than white principals (M=7.97).

The results of the post hoc procedures also show that the type of school where the principal works is related to the *school vision* component of socialization. Elementary and middle school principals reported higher levels of *school vision* than

did secondary and combination school principals (see Table 4). A combination school is generally defined as a school whose grade configuration is K-12.

Table 4. Mean Differences for *School Vision.*

School Type	Mean	N
Elementary	8.38	63
Middle	8.10	28
Secondary	7.85	34
Combination	7.55	11

Dependence on staff. ANOVA results show that the independent variable *prior location* shows a statistically significant relationship with the principals' *dependence on staff.* Dependence on staff is related to the principals' reliance on staff members at the school to provide information and assistance to the principal. These results are presented in Table 5 below. No interaction effects between independent variables and dependance on staff were found.

Table 5. ANOVA Results for Principals' *Dependence on Staff.*

Source	SS	df	F	p
Prior Location	17.63	1	5.50	< .05
Error	439.21	137		
Total	488.08	146		

A post hoc Tukey test was performed on the independent variable *prior location* to determine what differences exist for the dependent variable *dependence on staff.* The results of this procedure indicate that principals who worked in a different school during the previous year reported a greater dependence on staff members to assist in the socialization process.

Demographic characteristics of the sample. The analysis of the data reveals that the beginning principal in Louisiana is likely to be white (69%), between 40 and 49 years old (58%), teaching in a rural school (36%) with an enrollment of 250 - 499 (41%). The principal is approximately as likely to be male (52%) as female (48%), and about as likely to be promoted from within his or her own school (45%) as from a different school within his or her own district (52%). He or she was probably an assistant principal during the previous school year (69%). This demographic information is summarized in Table 6 below.

Table 6. Demographic Characteristics of 161 Beginning Principals in Louisiana.

Item	*Frequency (N)*	*Percent (%)*
Community Type		
Rural	55	36
Town	27	17
City	19	12
Urban Fringe	11	7
Metropolitan	43	28
Age		
20 - 29	0	0
30 - 39	18	11
40 - 49	92	58
50 - 59	48	30
60+	1	.6
Ethnicity		
African-American	45	31
White	100	69
Hispanic	1	.6
Gender		
Female	78	49
Male	82	51

Continued

Table 6. Continued.

	(N)	(%)
School Size		
Less than 250	18	11
250 - 499	65	41
500 - 749	45	28
750 - 999	14	9
1000+	18	11
School Type		
Elementary	77	48
Middle	33	21
Secondary	37	23
Combination	13	8
Prior Experience		
Assistant Principal	109	69
Teacher	30	19
Central Office	7	4
Other (Counselor, etc.)	12	8
Prior Location		
Within School	71	45
Within District/Different School	83	53
Different District	4	3

Limitations of the Study

The *Principal Socialization Inventory* is one of the few available instruments in the area of principal socialization. However, much of the instrument is focused on the professional socialization of beginning principals. In addition, the instrument is very new (1992), and there is little reliability information available.

The quantitative aspect of the study depends on the self-reporting of data by the principals, which always is cause for some concern in research. The relatively large sample size eases this concern somewhat, but the data is only as accurate as is provided by the principals in the sample. Due to the ex post facto research design, causality

cannot be determined. It may be seen that some relationships are identified between variables, but these may exist in a reciprocal, rather than causal framework.

The study is limited in generalizability to principals in Louisiana. Because the entire sample is from a single state, characteristics unique to that state may affect the external validity of the findings.

Conclusions

The results show that demographic variables are generally not predictors of the socialization experiences of beginning principals. However, some differences were found. For example, beginning principals in urban fringe communities report higher levels of socialization than principals in other types of communities. Principals in more populated areas have higher scores concerning school vision than principals in less populated areas. African-American principals and elementary/middle school principals also show higher levels of school vision. Principals who worked in a different school during the previous year report a greater dependence on staff members to assist in the socialization process.

The data shows a wide range of scores for all three socialization constructs; however, demographic categorical variables do not clearly account for the variation in results. These results lend support to the notion that the principals experience socialization in different ways, but the differences are primarily factors of the *personal characteristics* of the individual and the *organizational characteristics* of the school. Further qualitative research is needed to confirm this individual-organizational notion of the socialization process.

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APPENDIX A

BEGINNING PRINCIPALS' SURVEY

Please respond to the following statements in reflection of your first semester as a principal. Circle the items which most closely describe your experiences so far. Please use the following phrases as a guide for your responses.

Strongly Agree (SA), Agree (A), Neither Agree or Disagree (N), Disagree (D), Strongly Disagree (SD)

1. "I'm often so busy dealing with others' problems that it is difficult to implement my own agenda."	SA A N D SD
2. "I am nearly always in the classrooms."	SA A N D SD
3. "There is a person at my school who helps me to know who and what is important and what to deal with first."	SA A N D SD
4. "Things are beginning to fall into place and I'm beginning to work out my routines."	SA A N D SD
5. "I never seem to have enough time to get into the classrooms as much as I would prefer."	SA A N D SD
6. "I never know what kinds of fires I might have to put out next."	SA A N D SD
7. "Things are running pretty smoothly now, and all I have to do is routine duties."	SA A N D SD
8. "Faculty members supervise most of our projects so that I can be free to facilitate new ones."	SA A N D SD
9. "I like to provide the leadership, follow-up support, and actively contribute input on all school projects."	SA A N D SD
10. "I have many new ideas for our school and I am always helping others to see them."	SA A N D SD
11. "Hiring a few more faculty and staff of my own choosing might make things work more smoothly."	SA A N D SD
12. "There are not enough hours in the day to do everything that this job requires."	SA A N D SD
13. "Since taking this job, I almost feel like a stranger to my personal life and family."	SA A N D SD
14. "Because of the many details of this job, I worry about experiencing overload."	SA A N D SD

Please give the response which most closely describes you or your school situation.

School Name: _____

Parish or District: _____

Approximate Number of Students at Your School:

- ☐ Less than 250
- ☐ 250 - 499
- ☐ 500 - 749
- ☐ 750 - 999
- ☐ 1000 +

Age:

- ☐ 20 - 29
- ☐ 30 - 39
- ☐ 40 - 49
- ☐ 50 - 59
- ☐ 60 +

Grade Levels Taught at Your School:

_____

Ethnicity:

- ☐ African-American
- ☐ White
- ☐ Hispanic
- ☐ Asian/Pacific Islander
- ☐ Alaskan Native/ American Indian

Please check the description which most closely describes your position ***last year*** (1993-94).

- ☐ Assistant Principal
- ☐ Teacher
- ☐ Principal (at a different school)
- ☐ Central Office Staff
- ☐ Other (specify)_____

Gender:

- ☐ Female
- ☐ Male

Please check the description which most closely describes your work location ***last year*** (1993-94).

- ☐ Same school as this year.
- ☐ Same parish as this year, but a different school.
- ☐ Different parish than this year.

Thank you for your participation in this survey. Please return in the stamped envelope provided. All responses are confidential. ***Please write any additional positive or negative comments concerning the principalship on the back of this page.***